

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

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Rec'd: November 12, 1958
6:52 p.m.EUR
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RMR

FROM: Berlin

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 320, November 12, 6 p.m., (SECTION ONE OF TWO)

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Following is mission reaction to Khrushchev speech:

Speech seems to aim at several objectives, but only Berlin situation appropriate for our comment. We see as most important point in this part of speech a warning directed primarily to US, UK and France to recognize GDR or face increasing pressure on access to Berlin. This theme is not new, but when Khrushchev says it, presumably Soviets have moved close to, and if not all the way to, a decision to implement it.

Soviet objectives in trying to force allied recognition GDR well known. There is objective in connection their German reunification policy. There is also fact that if allies can be forced into even de facto recognition, GDR, basis on which allies occupy Berlin would be seriously undermined. Furthermore de facto recognition would give Communists improved stranglehold on allied access and place them in better position try to force eventual allied de jure recognition GDR. De jure recognition tantamount to official signing away our rights to occupy Berlin.

We think

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-2- 320, November 12, 6 p.m., (SECTION 1 OF 2) from Berlin

We think a key sentence re Berlin situation is that which reads: "For its part, Soviet Union will transfer to sovereign GDR those functions in Berlin which are now handled by Soviet organs." We interpret "will" to mean "are going to, whether other three powers do or not" rather than "would if other three powers will." From other passages in speech we conclude that "Berlin" is intended to include access thereto. Soviets have already in theory abolished occupation in Soviet zone, except for allied access which is under administrative controls of Berlin Kommandatura.

We have every reason believe Soviets take very seriously our security guarantee Berlin. We anticipate that turn over to GDR would be implemented gradually, and through GDR pressure would be applied in stages, avoid any action which Communists think would bring into force our security guarantee. Gradual implementation would also presumably offer advantage of enabling Communists to test us from time to time to determine how much more pressure they think would be needed to force us to come to terms with GDR.

It appears to us, therefore, that in foreseeable future East Germans may appear in place of Soviets at the several access checkpoints--more likely on surface routes at first than at Berlin air safety center. Also, at first, East Germans may pass allied official travellers with same documentation and formalities as Soviets do now. Our standing instructions are to accept this arrangement under protest.

As time goes on, however, we think screws will be tightened. Perhaps next step would be GDR effort try to stamp GDR visa on allied travel documents. Under our standing instructions, we refuse accept GDR visa. Should we at this point decide not impose on ourselves a surface blockade, we would in final analysis have to be prepared reopen access at gunpoint.

If we do permit GDR visas to be stamped on allied travel documents, next Communist step might be to require that allied official travellers obtain their GDR visas in advance of travel at GDR Foreign Office. This would put Communist in position to deny transit travel when they chose. And so on.

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58-H

Action
EUR

1958 NOV 13

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FROM: Berlin DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RMR

TO: Secretary of State

SS

NO: 320, November 12, 6 p.m., (SECTION TWO OF TWO)

G

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C

PRIORITY

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It hard for us believe that after experience of 1948-49 Communists would not try to interfere with air traffic, although here we are better situated to contend with interference. Most likely first step in this direction appears to us to be substitution East Germans for Soviet controller BASC. Our standing instruction are to usher East Germany out. We continue to fly without Communist "Flight safety guarantee" and onus is on them to fire first shot if they are in earnest in trying to stop us.

Mission is not in position to judge how far Communists might go in employing force to implement access harassment. We would observe, however, that in the air they would be the aggressors and the security guarantees should give them pause before they employ force to try to stop flights. On surface access they might maneuver us into a seemingly "aggressor" position, but even the Communists must be aware that dialections of this sort are not going to affect our decision to implement the security guarantee if we think such action necessary. Since it would be the GDR rather than the Soviet Union which would be faced

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-2- 320, November 12, 6 p.m., (SECTION TWO OF TWO), from Berlin.

with implementation of access harassment by force, failure to do so would presumably not involve the same prestige considerations for Communist world as would be case were Soviet forces directly involved. And the Communists might feel resultant loss of prestige to GDR could to some extent be offset by propaganda blasts to effect that three western powers have committed armed aggression against small but sovereign GDR all because they would not accept a visa.

Until Soviets do take action there is opportunity for solemn warning to Soviets at high levels of the serious consequences that would ensue were they to implement Khrushchev's threat. We feel that contact with Karl Shorst on this matter would be waste of time and possibly counter-productive.

We believe status US military liaison mission Potsdam will continue to be decided in future as it has presumably been decided in past -- i.e., on considerations having nothing to do with allied position Berlin, such as benefits Soviets consider they derive from having Soviet MLM in Frankfurt.

Above comments based on German text Khrushchev speech NEUES DEUTSCHLAND. We are conscious of inherent defects in any translation and will be happy if our reading of speech to effect Soviets have probably decided to turn over access control to GDR is shown to be wrong.

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